

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 AID-05
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P R 211315Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 863
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION SINAI
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE
USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT EG
SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTRY CLAIMS TO HAVE FOILED COMMUNIST PLOT
BEHIND CAIRO RIOTING

REF: CAIRO 1160

1. CAIRO DAILIES JANUARY 21 PROMINENTLY FEATURE ANNOUNCEMENT
BY MININT SAYYID FAHMY THAT POLICE HAVE UNCOVERED AND FOILED
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PLOT BY UNDERGROUND "COMMUNIST WORKERS PARTY" TO BURN DOWN
CAIRO AND SOW DISCORD DURING RECENT RIOTING. ACCORDING TO PUBLIC
PROSECUTOR IBRAHIM QALYUBI, PARTY HAS CLOSE TIES WITH PFLP AND
NATIONAL FRONT OF PDRY AND PARTY LEAFLETS FOUND IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
EGYPT DURING RIOTING, PROVING WELL-ORGANIZED
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. FOUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, ALLEGEDLY
PARTY ORGANIZERS, REPORTEDLY ARRESTED DURING DISTURBANCES.

2. ON LESS EXOTIC LEVEL, DAILIES ALSO REPORT THAT JOURNALISTS BELONGING TO PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY OF KHALID MUHYI AL-DIN WERE OBSERVED BY POLICE ENCOURAGING RIOTERS AND THEREFORE ARRESTED. AMONG DETAINEES: HUSAYN ABD AL-RAZAQ OF AKHBAR, MUHAMMAD SALMAWI OF AHRAH, AND USIF SABRY OF ROSE AL-YUSIF. PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST SECRETARY IN CAIRO'S SAYYIDA ZAYNAB DISTRICT ALSO ARRESTED "FOR LEADING RIOTERS". PROMINENT LEFTIST RIF'AT SA'ID ACCUSED OF INCITING RIOTERS IN MANSURA, BUT APPARENTLY NOT ARRESTED.

3. EDITORIALS PAY LIP SERVICE TO MININT ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT DO NOT DWELL ON SPECIFICS OF SUPPOSED "CONSPIRACY". AHRAH DEPLORES FACT THAT "INNOCENT CHILDREN" AND "NAIVE MASSES" DRAWN INTO ORGANIZED ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY. AKHBAR LEAVES INVESTIGATION OF CONSPIRACY TO AUTHORITIES, BUT REGRETS THAT CAIRO HAS BECOME "REFUGE FOR FUGITIVES FROM LAW AND LOAFERS FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES", WHICH GRATIFIED "THEIR BASE INSTINCTS" DURING RECENT DISTURBANCES. AKHBAR ALSO WARNS THAT "SOME PEOPLE" MISTAKENLY EQUATE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, WHICH EGYPTIANS NOW ENJOY, WITH ANARCHY. "LAW MUST HAVE SUFFICIENT POWER TO ENFORCE ITS RULE". SIGNIFICANTLY, AKHBAR INCLUDES MERCHANTS WHO CHOSE MOMENT OF GOVERNMENT PRICE RISES TO INCREASE PRICES ON ALL ITEMS AMONG REPREHENSIBLE LAWLESS ELEMENTS. GUMHURIYYA STRESSES THAT PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY PROVIDES CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR AIRING POPULAR GRIEVANCES AND HOPES THAT MASSES NOT PREPARED TO FOREGO DEMOCRATIC GAINS OF RECENT YEARS. THARWAT ABAZA IN AHRAH BLAMES "ARAB BROTHERS" WHO HAVE NOT HELPED EGYPT AND CLAIMS THAT "EGYPT ONLY ASKING ITS DUE IF IT NOW SEEKS AID FROM ARABS IN MOMENT OF HARDSHIP".
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4. COMMENT: MININT ANNOUNCEMENT IS CUSTOMARY GOE DEVICE TO BLAME SUCH ACTS OF DISSIDENCE ON COMMUNISTS. THEY UNDOUBTEDLY SEIZED ON QBLIC OUTRAGE, BUT ARE HARDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. EDITORIALISTS CLEARLY LESS THAN ENCHANTED WITH PAT CONSPIRACY THEORY PUT FORWARD BY MININT AND TACITLY CONCEDE POINT THAT OPPOSITION TO PRICE RISES WIDESPREAD AND NOT CONFINED TO COMMUNIST WORKERS PARTY. SOVIET EMBOFF COMMENTED JANUARY 20 THAT GOE WOULD BE DOING LOCAL MARXISTS A FAVOR IF MININT PERSISTE IN BLAMING "COMMUNISTS" FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES: SINCE VIOLENCE SO WIDESPREAD, MASSES WOULD GET IMPRESSION THAT COMMUNISTS IN FACT POWERFUL AND WELL ORGANIZED, RATHER THAN A HARASSED AND DISPIRITED FEW. THIS POINT APPARENTLY NOT LOST ON EDITORIALISTS, WHO DOWNPLAY SUGGESTION OF ORGANIZED CONSPIRACY.
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